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### PSC 343.01: Politics of Social Movements

Paul Haber

*University of Montana - Missoula*, paul.haber@umontana.edu

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# POLITICS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Instructor: Professor Paul Haber  
Political Science Department, course #343  
Spring 2010  
Meets: Wednesdays 4:10-6:30  
Office hours in LA 344: 12:30 - 2:00 (and by appointment)

office phone: 243-4862  
email: [paul.haber@umontana.edu](mailto:paul.haber@umontana.edu)

Books available for purchase in UC Bookstore:

1. Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper. 2009. *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Blackwell Publishing.
2. John Gaventa. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. University of Illinois Press.
3. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward. 1979. *Poor People's Movements: Why they Succeed, How they Fail* (Vintage Books, 1979).
4. Richard Stahler-Sholk, Harry Vanden, and Glen Kuecker, eds. 2008. *Latin American Social Movements in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Resistance, Power, and Democracy*. Rowman and Littlefield.

This is a seminar on contemporary social movements in the Americas. What role have social movements had in shaping the politics of power, as reflected in public policy, electoral politics, relations of class, race, and gender, and people's understanding of the world and their place in it? We will repeatedly ask the question, why have particular movements and movement organizations succeeded to the degree they have, and why have they failed to accomplish more?

No assumptions are made regarding students' familiarity with this subject. I do, however, assume a willingness to work hard to understand the histories of various social movements and the complexity of competing theoretical approaches. I also assume a willingness on the part of students to participate in seminar discussions.

## Grading

Gaventa/Piven and Cloward paper or alternative paper approved by professor 50%  
Class attendance, homework assignments, and contributions to class discussions 50%

Students are required to read all assigned readings on time, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. All assigned readings must be read carefully and analytically before the class listed below for discussion. Students must come prepared to summarize the readings and armed with questions and comments from the readings. Students are expected to attend all classes unless ill or in case of emergency. Make a serious effort to get to class on time. If you are absent or late, send me an email explaining it. Do not explain it to me on the phone, in class, before class or after class.

Students will discover that this course material is controversial, and open to differing interpretations. Students are expected to think analytically about the material, and to subject the material to rigorous scrutiny in class and in their written statements. I look favorably on efforts by students who make efforts to support arguments with outside materials and perspectives.

## READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### Part I: Social Movements: An Introduction in Nine Questions

We will organize our class meetings around the discussion questions presented by Goodwin and Jasper at the end of each introduction that precedes each part of the book along with additional questions posed by students. I will role model the process on January 27. After that, students will take the lead. Each class, every student will have responsibility to come to class ready to answer one of Goodwin and Jasper's questions as well as pose one of their own for class discussion. Even though students are responsible for answering only one question and posing one of their own it is required and extremely important that everyone do all the reading carefully. Students will be called on in class to comment on the answers provided by fellow students and also to answer the questions they pose. This will not be possible to do well if you have not read the material carefully.

January 27 Goodwin and Jenkins, pp. ix – 52

Question 1: When and Why Do Social Movements Occur? (Questions pg. 14)

February 3 Goodwin and Jenkins, pp. 53-140

Question 2: Who Joins and Supports Movements? (Questions pg. 59)

Question 3: Who Remains in Movements and Who Drops Out? (Questions pg. 95)

February 10 Goodwin and Jenkins, pp. 141-248

Question 4: What Do Movement Participants Think and Feel? (Questions pg. 145)

Question 5: How Are Movements Organized? (Questions pg. 192)

February 17 Goodwin and Jenkins, pp. 249-370

Question 6: What Do Movements Do? (Questions pg. 254)

Question 7: How Do Institutions Influence Movements? (Questions pg. 316)

February 24 Goodwin and Jenkins, pp. 371-440

Question 8: Why Do Movements Decline? (Questions pg. 375)

Question 9: What Changes Do Movements Bring About? (Questions pg. 413)

### Part II: Why are Social Movements so Difficult to Form: The Powers of Prevention

\*\*The class format for this book will be decided collectively.

March 3 Gaventa, Preface and pp. 1-83 (Read all of pp. 1-44 extremely carefully and give special attention to the conceptual issues raised pp. 47-53, 61-76, 80-83)

March 10 Gaventa, pp. 84-201 (Give special attention to the conceptual issues raised on pp. 84-96, 109-116, 141-145, 161-169, 192-195, 199-201.)

March 17 Gaventa, pp. 205-261 (note that we also start Piven and Cloward book on March 17)

## **Part II: Four Historical Case Studies and a Theory**

We will focus our classroom discussions on relating the theory (presented in chapter 1 to the case studies). We will divide the class in two on March 24 and April 7. One half will be responsible for one chapter and the other half will be responsible for the other chapter. Students will come to class prepared to summarize the history and relate the theory to the chapter for which they are responsible. Students are of course welcome to read the other chapter themselves but are not required to do so.

March 17 Piven and Cloward, pp. ix-37

March 24 Piven and Cloward, chapters two and three (Unemployed Workers' and Industrial Workers') and Mike Rose, "Blue-Collar Brilliance." The *American Scholar* 78 no3 43-9 Summer 2009 (blackboard)

April 7 Piven and Cloward, chapters four and five (Civil Rights and Welfare Rights)

## **Part III: Latin America**

\*\*The class format for this book will be decided collectively.

April 14 Stahler-Sholk, pp. 1-91 (Introduction/Historical Continuities and New Trends/Neoliberal Globalization and Democracy Lite: The Changing Political/Economic Context of Social Movements) and Paul Haber, "Contrasting Assessments of the Latin American Left/ Diagnósticos opuestos sobre la izquierda latinoamericana contemporánea"

April 21 Stahler-Sholk, pp. 93-212 (Community-Building Strategies, Consciousness/Agents of Social Change)

April 28 Stahler-Sholk, pp. 213-286 (Gender and Women's Movements/Repertoires and Sites of Contention: Parties, Shop Floors, and Streets)

May 5 Stahler-Sholk, pp. 287-343 (Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements)

## Gaventa/Piven and Cloward Paper

Begin your essay with an introductory section that outlines the way in which you have approached the assignment. You are required to make an argument in your paper. Begin by informing the reader of your conclusions and how you have supported your claims in the paper. Then, move on to the following:

**FIRST**, restate Gaventa's theoretical model (be sure to define the first, second, and third dimensions of power, why Gaventa's model is interactive, and the accumulation of both power and powerlessness). Then summarize, briefly, the way in which he tested the model in an Appalachian Valley. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

**SECOND**, restate Piven and Cloward's theoretical model. Then summarize, briefly, the way in which they tested the model. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

The summaries should address theory, methodology, and empirical findings. Neither summary need be more than a couple of pages long.

**THIRD**, take one of the three positions listed below and defend it:

- a. I find one of the two approaches (Gaventa or P&C) to be more useful and/or persuasive for understanding the politics of lower income Americans. (You could argue this from a number of perspectives, including political historian and/or political actor.)
- b. I find neither of the frameworks to be particularly useful or persuasive (or if you prefer, adequate) for understanding the politics of collective action by low income Americans.
- c. I find that both volumes make important, if different, contributions to our knowledge of American history and politics.

Students are encouraged to make use of insights from the Goodwin and Jasper volume in making your argument. If you do not like this framework, you have the option of presenting me with an alternative assignment. Any paper that veers from the above, however, must be approved by me in advance.

### Writing the Essay:

There is no absolute minimum length requirement for this essay. It seems unlikely, however, that it would be possible to write an essay of quality in less than seven or eight pages. The paper should not go much over ten pages. I will stop reading at the end of page twelve unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. All essays must be typed, double-space, one inch margins, 12 font size. Insert page numbers and staple your paper together. Do not bother with fancy covers.

Remember to make an argument. For example, a paper that does a good job of analyzing how the empirical findings support - or fail to persuasively support - the theoretical claims laid out in the first chapters of both books, is a stronger paper than one that relies more on description (i.e., first the author did this, then she did that, and she concluded with the following arguments). Be careful not to make unsubstantiated assertions. All claims need to be supported, through some combination of reasoning and evidence. This is as true for laudatory comments as it is for critical ones.

Your essay will be graded both in terms of the quality of the ideas presented and in terms of how well the essay is written. Be sure to edit your essay carefully for both style and content. Students are welcome to discuss ideas or paper writing strategies with me during office hours or by appointment. I encourage you to read each other's drafts, helping with both style and content. You are encouraged to cite outside readings. If you do so, provide bibliographic references.

Papers are due on May 12, in hard copy, in my office or in my mailbox, by 3:00pm. You have the option of writing a draft and having me make comments on it. If you would like to do this, you must hand me in a draft no later than April 28. I will hand comments back on May 5. If you are taking this class for 400 level credit, this is required.